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M. Steinhauer, Copenhagen; M. Thomsen, Copenhagen; Professor Welcker, Halle; Professor Worsaae, Copenhagen.

Local Secretaries Abroad.—M. Camille Bertrand, Montpellier; G. E. Fenwick, M.D., Montreal; Professor M. Giraudeau, Paris; Professor Hincks, Toronto; Professor F. Miklosich, Vienna; Dr. Phœbus, Giessen; Professor Raimondy, Lima; Dr. Schaaffhausen, Berne; Dr. Julius Schvarcz, Stuhlweissenberg, Hungary; Dr. Wienecke, Batavia.

Mr. C. C. BLAKE, Honorary Secretary, read the following list of Fellows elected since the last meeting of the Society:—George North, Esq., 4, Danes-inn; Rev. W. W. La Barte, Lexden, Colchester; W. F. G. Benson, Esq., 115, Kensington, Liverpool; George Witt, Esq., 22, Princes Terrace, Kensington.

The following presents, received since the last meeting, were announced, and thanks voted to the respective donors:—Three casts of the Macousi Indians of Guiana, presented by Dr. Canton; photographs of a Patagonian Chief, and of the son of the Queen of Tahiti, by Mr. Helsby, of Liverpool; various pamphlets by Dr. Beke, Dr. Hunt, and Mr. C. C. Blake.

Mr. W. WINWOOD READE read the following communication *On the Bush Tribes of Equatorial Africa*.

"I shall offer you a few remarks upon the subject of Equatorial Anthropology in Africa, and shall be happy to answer any questions you may choose to put to me as well as lies in my power.

Equatorial Africa is a country of virgin forests, mountainous, and well watered by rivers. There are no large plains, but here and there are found small prairies among the forests, and there is an abundance of swampy land.

The M'pongwe which inhabit the mouth of the Gaboon have become tolerably civilized by their contact with white men. It will be more interesting to consider that branch of the tribe which inhabit the Fernand Vaz, and who are called *Commi*. There are three more important bush tribes, viz., the Shekani, the Bakali, or Bakëlë, and the Bafanh, better known as the Fans.

There is nothing of importance to distinguish the Commi, the Bakëlë, and the Shekani from one another. The Commi are the most polished, the Bakëlë are possibly the rudest, but that, of course, depends much upon circumstances; there is little real difference between them. The constitution of these tribes is that of the Veddahs of Ceylon, and is one, I believe, that is common to most savage people. They live in families or clans, over which a head man, or patriarch, presides. This head man has influence, but no authority. He is usually the oldest man of the clan. The women, of course, do all the hard work, excepting that which is beyond their strength, as cutting down trees to clear a plantation, or which, like hunting and fishing, is beyond their skill. There is nothing by which the wives of these people can be distinguished from their slaves; in fact, they are slaves. The man who wants a wife buys her from her father with so much cloth, tobacco, etc. It is true that he is not allowed to kill her; but even if he did so, he would be allowed to escape with a slight fine. Those who are rich, of course, have

several wives. Indeed, the only way in which a man can invest his money is in wives and slaves.

Circumcision is common to the equatorial tribes, but I have not heard of that operation among them which is performed on the women of Senegambia ; it *may* exist, but it did not come under my notice. There are initiatory rites both among the men, and also among the women, like those of the Bona Dea. And it is very curious that in this last there is a custom resembling that of the vestal fire which was never suffered to go out. The men are severely flogged when initiated, and one of the fetish men makes curious noises from behind some kind of shrine. They worship wood spirits, lake spirits, mountain spirits, and they invoke the shades of their ancestors. They believe that there exists an unknown, unseen God, who is beneficent, and who has created all things. They also believe in the Evil Genius.

Manchester cloth is common enough in those parts of the country where a white man has never been, and that is the ordinary dress, fastened below the breasts, and falling to the ancles. Up the Fernando Vaz a very elegant grass-cloth is made. Among the Fans it is made from the inner bark of a tree, or sometimes a mere covering of goat-skin. I have seen people merely covered with fresh palm-leaves, but that is very rare. Little girls are not allowed to wear any clothing till they arrive at the age of puberty. This custom seems to prevail all over Africa, and Columbus observed that it was common to savage nations.

Respecting the Fans, I have little to add to the full and excellent paper which Consul Burton has written upon them. I do not think he has mentioned that they have an iron currency among them, consisting of small strips of iron made up into bundles, and this distinguishes them from the other bush tribes of Equatorial Africa. So does their cannibalism, of which I, for my part, have not the slightest doubt. The evidence of the neighbouring tribes is unanimous upon that matter ; and a Fan whom I questioned through interpreters told me with his own lips, that he had ate man himself : that it was like monkey, and very good ; that only the old men had the privilege of eating it ; and that the head fell to the chief or patriarch. He said that they always ate prisoners of war ; and that sometimes people condemned to death for sorcery were eaten. He denied that they ate the bodies of those who died among them : that, therefore, must remain a matter of doubt ; but respecting the custom of cannibalism, I cannot see why there should be any doubt about that at all.

On one point I differ from Capt. Burton. He says that wild cattle are abundant, and that the Fans have plenty of meat, and are not pushed to cannibalism by a craving for meat. I do not pretend to say whether they are or are not. But wild cattle are only found in the neighbourhood of prairies, that is to say, in any number, and most of the Fan country is virgin forest, where, as every scientific man knows, animal life is exceedingly rare, because air and light are shut out, and the growth of herbage is not sufficient for those animals which graze. It does very well for apes and elephants, who can feed on the leaves

of trees. The staple diet of the bush tribes of Equatorial Africa consists of plantains and cassada. I do not think that they ever eat fowls, and sheep only on gala days. Upon these points I think that Captain Burton has been misinformed. But I know that Captain Burton went into the Fan country, while I was up the Muni; and in all other particulars his description is extremely minute and correct.

Upon the question of tribes becoming extinct, I can support Captain Burton's assertion. Dr. Livingston has had too little experience in Western Africa to be an authority upon that question. The M'pongwe tribe itself is fast dying out, and large clans or families have become extinct within the memory of old men.

I feel certain that the natives of Equatorial Africa are not aborigines. They have among them many vestiges of a higher state of civilization, and it is probable that they have been migrating during ages towards the west. When they arrive at the sea-board the type begins to change. The complexion from tawny becomes black; the hair becomes less abundant; the lips thicken; and, in fact, they become typical Negroes—a race of men which have been falsely put forward as types of the African, but which are exceptional beings found only on the swampy banks of the African rivers, or in fenny places. I have occasionally heard of a stunted race of men found in the interior, which are, probably, the real aborigines and which may occupy the same place among these tribes as do the Hottentots among the Kaffirs. The Fans, as they told me, have migrated from the north-east. I afterwards visited the Fulahs of Senegambia, and I was so struck with their resemblance in physiognomy and in their habits and manners generally, that I cannot help thinking that the Fans are an offshoot of this great nation who have extended their conquests to the Niger. I shall publish ere long a complete description of these people, and also a very good vocabulary of the Fan, the M'pongwe, and other dialects of Equatorial Africa. The comparisons of languages, of the *construction* of languages is our only sure guide in tracing a people to their origin. With respect to the gorilla—for I suppose that there are some of us here who are not ashamed to own him as an ancestor, I can inform those gentlemen who are studying the ape-origin of man that as far as the habits of the gorilla are concerned he differs in no respect from the chimpanzee. It is, perhaps, worth while observing, that both these apes build nests as lying-in-hospitals for their females—a fact which I believe has not been made public. They are simply rude layers of sticks and branches. The chimpanzee has also the character among the natives of being more intelligent than the gorilla; in a state of captivity both are equally docile.

Mr. WINWOOD READE then proceeded to give a description of the exceedingly interesting objects collected by him in Western Africa, and which he has presented to the society.

Mr. A. A. FRASER. In the Pacific as in Equatorial Africa, wives are regarded almost like beasts of burden, but the light race treats its women very much better than the dark race. There are also great ceremonies in celebration of the arrival of young men at maturity, the

principal ceremony being the investiture of the young man, who stands on the body of a man murdered for the purpose, with his clothing. Mr. Fraser considered that the true cause of the varieties of colour in man are not at all understood. In the Fiji islands black and light races are found under identical circumstances of heat, soil, and moisture.

Mr. AVERY inquired what the traces of superior civilization in Western Africa, to which Mr. Reade had alluded, were. Mr. Avery attributed great influence in the production of race to local influences, and referred to the North Devon breed of cattle, which is, he is informed, peculiar to North Devon, and cannot be preserved in other parts of the country. Mr. Avery also inquired whether the tribes of Equatorial Africa have any code of morals.

Mr. BOUVERIE PUSEY inquired where the Cuban slaves came from.

Mr. C. C. BLAKE thought that the investigation of the relations between geology and ethnic distribution would be a matter of great interest, and would throw great light upon many problems of general anthropology. Mr. Blake also alluded to the great structural and moral differences which exist between the Negro and European, and stated that Mr. Reade's observations entirely justified the strong opinions on these points expressed by Captain Burton.

Mr. WINWOOD READE said, in reply, the slaves of Cuba come now from the Congo; there the typical Negro is found. The slaves are the most degraded of the people. It is a mistake to suppose that the prevalent type of the inhabitants of Western Africa is that of the Negro. Negroes are confined to the banks of rivers and to marshy places; in mountainous districts the people are tawny. There can be no doubt of the extinction of tribes in Equatorial Africa, and it appears to be chiefly attributable to the constant tide of migration towards the coast, the climate of which is so fatal both to Europeans and natives; the principal other causes are early marriages and the abuse of young children. The traces of a superior civilization to which I referred, are chiefly traditions, the customs of burning a sort of vestal fire when the women are initiated, and the language being of a character far too perfect to have originated among a totally uncivilized people. To the question whether these people have any code of morals, I answer, yes. Adultery is punishable by slavery or death. The women sometimes entice the young men for the purpose of betraying them to their husbands, who sell them and divide the profits with their wives. The religion of these tribes is of a fetish nature; they believe in a Great Spirit, the Creator of all things, but do not often mention him. As regards the influence of civilized man on the Negroes, I fear that the only effect of the efforts of the missionaries as yet, has been to make them hypocritical. As regards the cannibalism of the Fans, I entirely agree with Captain Burton. The evidence of the neighbouring tribes is unanimous on the point. I was also assured by a missionary that he had not the slightest doubt of it. The human flesh is not eaten indiscriminately, the women and young men are not allowed to partake of it. I believe that although language is not in all cases an accurate test of race, it will be found to be so in all ex-

cept a few exceptional cases; I think, however, that a good collection of well authenticated crania will be found to be of the greatest service in this respect.

The PRESIDENT thought that language would be found to be but a very uncertain criterion of race, and that such an application of it as suggested by Dr. Latham, viz., the deducing from the percentage of British, Danish, Saxon, and French words found to occur in local dialects, the mixture of races in the different parts of England, would be found to lead to entirely erroneous results. He quite admitted the importance of the study of comparative craniology, and considered that photographic representations of typical specimens of different tribes would also be found specially valuable.

Dr. BERTHOLD SEEMANN: In the determination of race the examination of the skull is not sufficient; it is absolutely necessary, in many cases at least, to see the soft parts. I myself should like to see in London an anthropological garden, something on the same principle as the Zoological Gardens, where living specimens of the principal varieties of the human race might be seen and compared. I do not think language a test of race. In Germany, a hundred years ago, Slavonic was extensively spoken, but has now entirely disappeared. Similarly the Wendic is almost extinct, although it still lingers in some of the villages of Saxony. The influence of climate on race appears to be considerable. Cattle taken to America become so stupid that they lose the instinct of self-preservation, and the trains on the American railways are obliged to be provided with cattle catchers, as the animals will not get out of the way.

Mr. AVERY suggested that missionaries should be furnished with blank forms of questions on anthropological subjects. Although not men of sciences they would, he felt sure, be above all men both able and willing to afford accurate information.

Mr. C. C. BLAKE: The Anthropological Society of Paris have sent questions to travellers, but have received few answers. A most able and elaborate series of questions for travellers proceeding to Peru was prepared by that society, but very little has resulted from it. Missionaries will, of course, be eligible for Local Secretaries, but the council will be guided in their selection solely by the qualifications of the candidates.

Dr. BERTHOLD SEEMANN: Missionaries are on the whole not trustworthy, as they are not independent agents; but Ellis and Turner must be mentioned as great exceptions. The reports of the missionaries are also, after their receipt in this country, very much altered and modified, to suit the tastes of the English public.

Mr. WINWOOD READE: My own experience of equatorial Africa is, that the only reliable information is to be got from the missionaries. I refer more especially to the American missionaries, who are specially educated for their work. Many of them take great interest in science. Mr. Mackie, of Corisco, was making a collection of fishes for the Smithsonian Institute, when I was at the Gaboon.

The PRESIDENT stated that the Honorary Foreign Secretary would be happy to receive the names of gentlemen for local secretaries abroad, and adjourned the meeting.